

Planning Commission Comments from October 11, 2011**Compact Design District TC1000005**

Ms. Beechwood – I voted to approve with the inclusion of staff recommendations #3 and #4. My vote was an attempt to move this effort forward while being sensitive to the needs of the neighborhood, responsive to the requirements of functional urban development and aligned with the intent of the design district.

Kudos to Lisa Miller and the Planning Department for guiding the four stakeholder meetings that were held between August and October, and for developing the four revisions to the text amendment.

It is important to note that Durham does not have a wealth of experience with implementing design districts, meaningful mixed-use, or transit-oriented development. That we will be inserting these new built environment strategies into an existing old, historic residential neighborhood where there is an existing development plan only adds to the challenge. Although there is widespread agreement that all of these strategies will be needed in the Ninth Street area in order to meet future needs, it doesn't make getting there any easier. In this respect, Tom Miller is correct when he states that we will be going down this road again and again in our efforts to implement design districts across Durham. And I agree with George Stanziale that what we will have in the Ninth Street area is a design district hybrid, and that devil is in which details get hybridized.

In an effort to capture and retain what has been learned in the ninth street effort, the city might consider having a sub-committee of the Design District Review Team involved in any new design district in an advisory capacity, to suggest ways in which stakeholders can find consensus and recommend approaches for managing implementation.

Ms. Board – I reluctantly voted yes for the text change and the two additional recommendations from the Planning Department which were included in the motion. I would have preferred to have seen all the recommendations included, and the additional change from a minimum height of 45 feet to 50 feet. Doing so would have made the approved development plan for Ninth Street North consistent with the Ninth Street Compact Design District. 50 feet is consistent with the similar zone in the Downtown Design District, but was not acceptable to the Planning Staff at this time.

Ms. Brown – I am not sure how my vote was counted because of all of the confusion around these two items.

I am supporting staff's recommendations. I hope the CC will also support staffs recommendation.

Many stakeholders have worked on this plan for over 5 years, its past time to move this compromise on.

Mr. Harris – I voted against the motion to approve. The text amendment including only items 3&4. I am in favor of Items 1,3, and 4.

Ms. Mitchell-Allen – I voted to approve.

Mr. Smudski – How much difference in 3 stories and 50 feet? Does the neighborhood have a problem with that flexibility? Mandating a use does not mean I can be sold. I agree that it can be included, but not mandatory.